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## PLANNING PROMOTION FOR EMPLOYEES AND ITS EFFECT IN REDUCING LABOR TURNOVER

BY PHILIP J. REILLY,

Employment Manager, Dennison Manufacturing Company.

The labor turnover figures of many industries are sometimes increased because no studied effort has been made to plan the promotions of worthy employees. In many industries it is possible to promote employees systematically. When this can be done, it is well worth while to establish a policy of regular promotions, and to adhere to it as far as practicable when filling any positions of preferment.

In our manufacturing organization, the majority of the occupations furnish in themselves sufficient scope for promotion, since they enable an unskilled worker to become skilled and to earn a wage that will be equal to or even better than the wage earned by the average worker in the trades. Any plan for regularly advancing employees must provide for a rerating of employees at certain intervals even in these occupations, so that deserving employees will be granted unasked-for pay increases. To effect this result, we have established the policy of going over the records of all our employees once a month, for the purpose of rerating them. This is done by the department heads. In addition to this, the employment department checks up the pay rates in such occupations at regular intervals so as to bring up for promotion the names of any employees who may have been overlooked.

Some of our occupations, however, do not in themselves offer to the ambitious employee much opportunity of advancement. These jobs are merely used as feeders to positions with chances for advancement. When such positions are so used, we find that a higher type of employee can be attracted since many industrious applicants will, for the time being, accept positions whose requirements are somewhat beneath their capabilities, provided that a way of escape is open from these positions into the more desirable ones.

The job analysis form which we have on file for each position in our industry indicates the lines of probable promotion from the feeder positions. The information given by this form enables the

selector to inform an employe engaged for "jogging" in our label department that he will get the first chance on guillotine cutters, when a vacancy occurs. Employes engaged for chopping in our board department will get the first chance on paper cutting when a vacancy occurs. Truckers in our shipping department always get the first chance to do packing; and in the same department, bundlers and order-fillers get the first opportunities to do checking. The latter named positions are the better paid and usually the most satisfactory to the average employe.

Thus we have developed in our business outlets to better positions from practically all the feeder jobs. This practice results not only in obtaining a better grade of employe for the feeder positions, but also in making better workmen of the employes when they reach the higher positions by virtue of their experience in a connected line of work.

This plan also takes care of the large proportion of our transfers; but an employe is free at any time to come to the employment department with a request to be transferred. In 1916, 60 per cent of our transfers were made by the employment department for the employe's advancement, while only 5 per cent were made at the request of the employe. If this group of employes had left dissatisfied, our labor turnover would have been increased 10 per cent.

We have found that there are certain types of positions which are more attractive than others to our employes. In filling these, older workers are given preference, other things being equal. Clerical positions are always sought for. Any positions which are much sought for usually have a small labor turnover. This is true of clerical positions. Therefore, we have found it possible to place in clerical positions only a fraction of our applicants. This is especially true in June when high schools and business colleges are graduating additional applicants for these positions.

We have found many applicants who, unable to obtain clerical positions immediately, are willing to take factory jobs, provided they are assured that they will be given consideration for clerical positions when vacancies occur. Under these circumstances, applicants are placed in various factory positions, which do not require a long period of training, and from which they can be promoted to good advantage into clerical positions. A record of the applicant's preference for clerical work is kept in the employment

department, and when vacancies occur, this record is consulted and applicants selected from the factory for office work.

Of course for certain positions, requiring training along special lines, we must employ outside applicants from our waiting list. In the large majority of cases, however, the clerical positions are filled by employes who are on our factory pay roll. We have found that in the more difficult clerical positions, the employes who have had factory training are more satisfactory than the clerks who are hired direct from the outside, who have had no training in our business. Aside from this advantage, we find that the free flow of workers from factory to office rather makes for a democratic feeling, since there is less class distinction between the office and factory group when the office group is largely composed of former factory employes.

Desirable positions are open from time to time toward which none of the regular factory positions naturally lead. These usually consist of special jobs, requiring unusual qualities or exceptional ability. One means of discovering employes who would be in line for such positions is to develop a list of exceptional employes. Our record for this purpose represents employes who are above the average in their present jobs, and who could probably fill positions of more responsibility. Two or three names are selected from this list, and a decision made as to who should be placed in the position in question.

In our industry, this list is developed and used by the personnel committee, which is a subcommittee of the executive committee of the factory. Names are added to this list from the reports this committee receives from time to time from foremen and department heads.

The listing of names of worthy employes, when solely the act of the management, may occasionally overlook some employes who deserve recognition. To prevent this, we invite employes who feel that they deserve promotion to seek an interview with the personnel committee. Thus an employe by writing a request and dropping it into the suggestion box, may obtain an interview. The suggestion department delivers all such communications to the employment department, which obtains the data covering the employe and presents them to the personnel committee for study at the time it is ready to meet the employe.

The policy of having regular promotions for employes is not always easy to follow; but when generally adhered to, it yields very happy results. It may appear to mean additional work for the employment department because at least two, and sometimes several, employes are affected every time a vacancy at the top occurs, but this long-sighted policy will usually compensate for itself in the final result that it brings.

This results in developing an organization of employes who are versatile, because most of them have had experience at more than one job. Such an organization will function more smoothly and engenders loyalty and *esprit de corps* because of the satisfaction felt by employes who have had the chances their abilities deserve. Finally, it reduces measurably the labor turnover because there will be few if any exits from the pay roll due to employes having had no chance to get ahead.

In adopting a policy of systematic promotions, a fundamental principle is to plan in advance the channels of promotion within departments and from one department to another, and outline these channels on the job analysis form.

The next principle is to keep a practical record that will reveal promising employes, and to record separately special training or aptitudes which certain employes have, and which can be used in higher positions when vacancies occur.

The third principle, which is of extreme importance, is to choose from your present force first for all positions vacated, except the feeder positions. The fourth principle is to invite employes to request promotion when they are dissatisfied with their present positions.

Whether promotion is deserved or not, discussing the matter with any employe in an organization results in a better understanding; and if the promotion is not deserved at the time the request is made, the employe can be encouraged to win it by making every effort in his present work, or by devoting his spare time to the study of the particular subject that will fit him later for the promotion he desires.